

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

It was a great disappointment to find that in his admirable and most illuminative *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* Dr. Zahn has abandoned the usual view (and, as I believe, the right view) as to the order of composition of the earlier Epistles of St. Paul, and has placed *Galatians* chronologically first among the letters, taking it as written from Corinth early in the first visit (Acts xviii. 1 ff.).¹ I had expected that he would give us a thorough examination of the Epistle from the South-Galatian point of view; but this mistake (if I may venture to speak so) as to date and place of origin must conceal from him many delicate yet important features. In the following notes the attempt will be made to bring out some of the wealth of meaning which the Epistle gains when its origin, date, and purpose are rightly conceived. I have not the knowledge or skill to do this properly and fully; but I hope to emphasize some little-noticed features, and to suggest to scholars, who are better fitted to explain the New Testament, views which they may improve and develop.

It is plain that, on the North-Galatian theory, no light is thrown on the Epistle by consideration of the persons to whom it was addressed, or the political circumstances of their country, and very little by consideration of the date and place of origin to which it must be assigned (assuming this to be either Ephesus, or Greece, or Macedonia during

¹ In various less important points Dr. Zahn dissents from my views; but in the essential question—North Galatian or South Galatian—he is unhesitating: the Epistle was written to the Churches of Iconium, Antioch, Derbe, and Lystra.

the last visit). As to the former point—viz., the persons addressed—the only “elucidation” of the Epistle from that side is the stereotyped joke that the Galatians had changed their religion rapidly, and the French are fickle (though no reason is ever given, or can be given, to think that the Gauls, or the French, are apt to change their religion). It is, however, satisfactory to see that recent writers refuse to accept this illustration (*e.g.* Zöckler, in his excellent commentary, ed. II.; and Salmon, in Smith’s *Dict. Bib.*).

As to their political and social circumstances, not a single allusion to the subject is known to me among the North-Galatian commentators.¹ The central regions of Asia Minor were then in a very marked and peculiar position. The Roman organization was being gradually extended through them. Each region, as it was thought fit for Roman administration, was taken into the Empire; and the way in which it was received was that it was made a part of the Provincia Galatia, while those regions that were still too barbarous and unruly were left under kings, who, being close at hand, were ready for instant action. Thus to share in the name Galatia, or the epithet Galatic (Acts xvi. 6, xviii. 23), implied advance in civilization and education; and among those who shared in the Roman (or, rather, Græco-Roman) education there existed a great contempt for the outer, non-Roman, non-Galatic barbarians. The South-Galatian commentators read the Epistle as part of the history of this transitional stage. What has been said in my *St. Paul*, ch. vi., on the relation between the Pauline preaching and the Roman policy in these lands need not be here repeated; but those who would understand the Epistle from the South-Galatian view and appreciate the argument in the following notes must bear it in mind.

¹ Contrast with their attitude the tone of Mr. Rendall, *e.g.*, in *EXPOSITOR*, Nov., 1893, p. 321. To him Paul has the statesmanlike spirit of one dealing with actual political facts.

I. THE INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

In any judicious system of interpretation, great stress must be laid on the introductory address of this Epistle. It should be compared with the address prefixed to the Epistle to the Romans, a letter which presents marked analogies in sentiment and topics. In each case Paul puts in his introduction the marrow of the whole letter. He says at first in a few words what he is going to say at length in the body of the letter, to repeat over and over, to emphasize from various points of view, and to drive home into the minds of his correspondents.

The phrase, "all the brethren which are with me," arrests our attention. Paul wrote in some place where there was a considerable body of Christians; and we may confidently say that that implies one or other of the cities where there were churches. The words used by Dr. Zöckler to describe the situation in which Paul wrote are so good, that we may leave it to him to express what is implied in this phrase. As he has been so prominent an adversary of the South-Galatian theory, no one will be able to charge me with straining Paul's words to suit my own view. He says: "The whole body of fellow-Christians who were with him at the time in——¹ (not merely his more prominent helpers) are mentioned by St. Paul as those who join with him in greeting the Galatians. He does this in order to give the more emphasis to what he has to say to them. He writes indeed with his own hand (vi. 13), but in the name of a whole great Christian community. The warnings and exhortations which are to be addressed to the Galatians go forth from a body whose authority cannot be lightly regarded."

Further, it must be observed that Paul mentions, in the

¹ Dr. Zöckler names "Ephesus" here, without hesitation, conformably to his theory, which is the commonly received view among North-Galatian critics.

preliminary address of his letters, only persons who stood in some close and authoritative relation to the community addressed: ¹ thus, Sosthenes joins in the address in *1 Cor.*, and he was evidently a leading member of the Corinthian Church, possibly a former chief of the synagogue; Timothy (who had shared in the first preaching) joins in the address, *2 Cor.* and *Phil.*; he also is named to the Colossians (whose apostle he may probably have been); ² Silvanus and Timothy join in addressing the Thessalonians, with whom they had been in such close relations from the first. No one joins in the address in *Romans*, *Ephesians*, *Timothy*, *Titus*.

The Church which here addresses the Galatians, therefore, is one which was closely connected with them, whose opinion would carry weight among them, one which could add impressiveness even to a letter of Paul's. What congregation stood in this relation to the Galatians? Not the Ephesians, nor the Corinthians, later converts, who are not mentioned in the addresses of the letters that are known to have been written among them (*Rom.*, *1 Cor.*). Only two congregations could add weight to this particular letter—Jerusalem and Antioch. The former is, for many reasons, out of the question; but Antioch is, from every point of view, specially suitable and impressive. It was the brethren at Antioch who chose out Barnabas and Saul for the work, in the course of which the Galatians were converted. Antioch was the Mother-Church to the Galatians, and it would be specially effective among the Galatians that all the brethren who were at Antioch joined in the letter.

The same conclusion as to the locality whence the letter

¹ Salutations at the end of a letter are those of simple love and good-will; at the beginning, of authority. At the end of *Romans*, *Corinthians*, *Philippians*, etc., hosts of well-wishers send greetings.

² *St. Paul the Trav.*, p. 274. Timothy is named to Philemon, and the Church in his house, for the same reason as to Colossæ.

was written has already been drawn from a consideration of the relations between Paul and the Galatian Churches. It was, in all probability, at Antioch that Paul received the first news of the Galatian defection (*St. Paul the Trav.*, p. 189 f.).

The place of origin throws light on the Epistle as a whole. In the first place, if the Church of Antioch shared in it, the letter must have been publicly read¹ and approved before it was despatched. Few, I imagine, will suppose that Paul merely assumed that all who were with him agreed in his sentiments without consulting them: those who thus conceive the character of Paul differ so radically from me that discussion of the point between us would be unprofitable. Accordingly, we must understand that the history as well as the sentiment contained in this Epistle, were guaranteed by the whole Church of Antioch.

In the second place, this shows why it is that Antioch, which was so closely associated with the evangelization of Galatia, is not formally alluded to in the body of the letter. The Epistle formerly always produced on me a certain painful impression, as not recognising the right of Antioch to some share in the championship of freedom. Antioch had taken a very prominent and honourable part in the struggle for freedom; yet, on the ordinary theory of origin, it is not

¹ Either before the whole Church, or more probably before its representatives. Thus, for example, the salutation of "all the Churches" in *Rom.* xvi. 16, means the salutation of the representatives enumerated *Acts* xx. 4, and then in company with Paul as he wrote. Incidentally, it may be noted that this proves that the long list of greetings in *Rom.* xvi. was really addressed to the Roman Church, and not, according to a well-known theory, to the Church of Ephesus. It is surely by a slip that Dr. Sanday and Mr. Headlam fail to notice the meaning of this salutation, and say, "it is a habit of St. Paul to speak on behalf of the Churches as a whole," quoting, in support of this statement, *Rom.* xvi. 4, *1 Cor.* vii. 17, xiv. 33, *2 Cor.* viii. 18, xi. 28: in none of these places does Paul speak in the name of the Churches, except *Rom.* xvi. 4, where he has the same justification, that representatives of the Churches were with him: in the other cases he merely mentions facts about "all the Churches." Further, this shows that all the delegates assembled at Corinth, disproving the view suggested in my *St. Paul*, p. 287 (abandoned in German edition).

alluded to in this letter, except to point out that every Jew in Antioch betrayed on one occasion the cause of freedom. Considering what Antioch had done for Christianity and for Paul, every one who follows the ordinary theory must, I think, feel a pang of regret in Paul's interest that he did not by some word or expression give more generous recognition to her services. In a letter, in which he speaks so much about the actual details of the struggle, he seems, on that view, to speak only of his own services, and hardly at all to allude to the services of others.¹ But when all Antiochian Christians are associated with the Apostle throughout, we feel that the Church of Antioch is placed in the honourable position which she had earned.

What a flood of light does this fact throw on the history of Antioch and of early Christianity! It shows us the congregation of Antioch standing side by side with Paul, sharing in his views, his difficulties, and his struggles for freedom. The Jewish Christians in Antioch had all apparently become united by this time with the Gentiles in sympathy with Paul, just as Barnabas and Peter had been. This in itself is an answer to those who, like Mr. Baring Gould, blame Paul entirely for the separation between Jews and Christians. The mingled conciliation (as in Acts xv. 30, 31, and xvi. 3, 4) and firmness of Paul gradually produced a unity of Jewish and Gentile Christians throughout Asia Minor² and the Antiochian district.

The mischief caused by the North-Galatian theory is not merely that it produces erroneous ideas on many points, but that it shuts the eyes to many other points. Here, for example, it deprives us of all evidence in the New Testa-

¹ In the Epistle to the Romans, though the subject and treatment are in some respects so similar, there is not the same need or opening for mentioning Antioch, because the subject is handled in a general and philosophical way, not in the personal and individual style which rules in *Galatians*.

² Reasons for this view are stated in chaps. xii., xv., xvii. of my *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, on the history of the Christians and the Jews in Phrygia.

ment for the feeling that existed between Paul and the Antiochian Church after the events narrated in *Acts* xv. and *Galatians* ii. ff.

It will hardly be advanced as an argument against Antioch as the place of origin that Syria and Antioch are mentioned in the letter by name, and that Paul does not say "here" in place of "to Antioch," ii. 11. In *1 Corinthians*, which was written at Ephesus, he used the expression, "at Ephesus," and mentions "Asia."

Dr. Clemen has rightly recognised the force of the reference to "all the brethren with me," and he explains it by dating the composition of *Galatians* immediately after *Romans*, when all the delegates of the Churches were with Paul.¹ It may be fully granted that this would explain most satisfactorily the use of the phrase; but other considerations prevent us from accepting so late a date for the letter.

II. PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE EPISTLE.

The persons mentioned by name in the Epistle are Titus, Cephas Peter, James, John, and Barnabas.

Titus was evidently unknown to the Galatians. The point of Paul's reference to him turns on his nationality. He was a Greek, and this is carefully explained in ii. 3, so that the readers may not fail to catch the drift of the argument. Had the Galatians known Titus, had he accompanied Paul on a journey and been familiar to them, the explanation would have been unnecessary; and in this Epistle there is not a single unnecessary word.

It is assumed that the Galatians know that Cephas and Peter were the same person; but we cannot suppose that they were converted without learning who the Twelve Apostles were; and, even if Paul and Barnabas had not made the Apostles known to them, the Judaizing emis-

¹ See footnote on p. 405.

saries would have done so, as the whole burden of their argument was that James, Peter, etc., were superior in authority to Paul. Yet, even as regards the three, James and Cephas and John, the point on which the argument turns, "they who were reputed to be pillars," is made clear and explicit. Some knowledge about the Apostles is assumed; but the crucial point is expressed, and not merely assumed.

Barnabas, however, is mentioned simply by name, and it is assumed that his personality was familiar to the Galatians. "Even Barnabas was carried away." The whole point in this expression lies in Barnabas's staunch championship of Gentile rights, but a knowledge of his action and views is supposed. Paul, who even explains that James, Peter, and John were the leading Apostles, assumes that Barnabas is so familiar, that his argument will be caught without any explanation. There is only one set of congregations among whom it could be assumed that Barnabas was better known than Peter and James and John. Paul was writing to the Galatians, whom Barnabas and he had converted, and among whom Barnabas had spent many months. We must conclude that Barnabas was known to the Galatians, while Titus was unknown to them.

Now it is argued in my *St. Paul*, p. 285, that Titus was taken by Paul with him on his third journey (Acts xviii. 23). After that journey, when Titus had spent a good many weeks among the Galatians, it would not have been necessary to explain to them that he was a Greek. On the other hand, it was a telling sequel to the Epistle that Titus, who is quoted as an example to the Galatians, and who was of course one of "the brethren which are with me," and associated in the Epistle, should personally visit the Galatians along with Paul on his next journey. There is a natural connection between the prominence of

Titus in Paul's mind during this Galatian crisis and the selection of him as companion among the Galatians. I should be quite prepared to find that, when Paul went on to Ephesus, Titus was left behind for a time in Galatia, confirming the churches and organizing the contribution; and that thereafter he rejoined Paul at Ephesus in time to be sent on a mission for a similar purpose to Corinth.

Now, glance for a moment at the North-Galatian theory. It is certain that, according to that view, Barnabas was personally unknown to the North Galatians, while there is a considerable probability that Titus (who was with Paul in Ephesus) had accompanied him all the way from Ephesus, and was therefore known to the Galatians. The North-Galatian view leaves the tone of the references an insoluble difficulty.

III. RELATION OF PAUL TO BARNABAS.

It has often been said that Paul is very niggardly here in recognition of Barnabas's work as a champion of Gentile rights. But Paul was not writing a history for the ignorant; he assumes throughout that the Galatians know the services of Barnabas. The single phrase "even Barnabas" is a sufficient answer to that charge. The one word "even" recalls the whole past to the interested readers; it places Barnabas above Peter in this respect. Peter had recognised the apostolate to the Gentiles: Peter had eaten with the Gentiles: but his dissembling, after all that, was not so extraordinary a thing as that "even Barnabas was carried away with the dissimulation" of the other Jews. That one phrase places Barnabas on a pedestal as a leading champion of the Gentiles; and yet it does not explicitly state that; it merely assumes the knowledge of his championship among the Galatians.

Further, where Paul speaks of his first journey, *i.e.* his

Gospel to the Galatians,¹ he uses the plural pronoun: "any Gospel other than that which *we* preached unto you" (i. 8); "as *we* have said before, so say I now again" (i. 9).

The Galatians caught the meaning of "we" in these cases as "Barnabas and I." On the other hand, where the reference is to the division which had now come into existence between the Galatians and their evangelist, Barnabas is not included, and the singular pronoun is used (iv. 12 ff.). There was no alienation between the Galatians and Barnabas, for Barnabas had not returned to them; and, as we shall see, it was through perversion and through real misunderstanding of Paul's conduct on his second journey that the division arose.

IV. "I MARVEL."

After the introductory address—the heading of the letter, so to say—Paul usually begins the body of the letter with an expression of thanks (so *Rom.*, *1 Cor.*, *Phil.*, *Col.*, *1* and *2 Thess.*, *2 Tim.*, *Philem.*), or of blessing (so *2 Cor.*, *Eph.*). The exceptions are *1 Timothy* and *Titus* (in which he plunges at once into the important business of Church order and teaching, the cause of the letters). The letter to the Galatians differs from all others. Not merely is there no expression of thankfulness; Paul goes at once to the business in hand, "I marvel that ye are so quickly removing," and then he pronounces a curse on any one, man or angel from heaven, who preaches to the Galatians "any gospel other than that which we preached unto you"—"any gospel other than that which ye received." The reference, of course, is to the message which converted the Galatians, the Gospel which originally called them from darkness to light.

¹ It is important to observe that when Paul speaks of the Gospel to the Galatians, he means the message which converted them, viz. his first visit.

The intense feeling under which Paul was labouring is shown by the unique character of the opening, and by the strength—one might say, the violence—of the language. Anything that is said in this first paragraph must be understood as being of overwhelming importance. Paul here touches the crucial point of the Galatian difficulty.

V. "YE CHANGE SO QUICKLY."

The position of these words in the opening of the letter shows that we must lay the utmost stress on them. Paul had evidently heard nothing of the steps by which the Galatians had passed over to the Judaizing side. We may assume, of course, that there were steps: however rapidly, from one point of view, it came about, time is required to change so completely the religion of several cities so widely separated. But Paul had heard nothing of the intermediate steps. He heard suddenly that the Galatian churches are crossing over to the Judaistic side. This point requires notice.

In the case of the Corinthian Church, we can *trace* in the two Epistles the development of the Judaizing tendency. In the first Epistle it hardly appears. The difficulties and errors which are there mentioned are rather the effect of the tone and surroundings of Hellenic paganism: lax morality, and a low conception of purity and duty, are more obvious than the tendency to follow Judaizing teachers. There is a marked tendency in Paul's tone to make allowance for the Judaic point of view: the writer is quite hopeful of maintaining union and friendly relations with the Jewish community. We observe here much the same stage as that on which the Galatian Churches stood at Paul's second visit, *Acts* xvi. 1-5: then, also, Paul was full of consideration for the Jews, hopeful of unity, ready to go to the furthest possible point in conciliating them by showing respect to their prejudices, de-

livering the Apostolic Decree, and charging them to observe its prohibition of meat offered to idols and of those indulgences which were permitted by universal consent in pagan society. In 1 *Corinthians* his instruction is to the same general effect, though delivered with much greater insight into the practical bearing and the philosophic basis of the rules of life which he lays down. He had learned in the case of the Galatian Churches what mistaken conceptions the Apostolic Decree was liable to rouse, if it were delivered to his converts as a law for them to keep: he knew that, if there were any opening left, the ordinary man would understand that the Decree would be taken as a sort of preparation for, and imperfect stage leading up to, the whole Law. His instructions to the *Corinthians* are carefully framed so as to guard against the evils which had been experienced in Galatia; and yet the principles and rules which he lays down represent exactly his conception of the truth embodied in the Apostolic Decree.¹ Much of 1 *Corinthians* is the statement of the moral and philosophical basis on which rested the external and rather crude rules embodied in that Decree.

On the other hand, in 2 *Corinthians* the old evils are sensibly diminished, to Paul's great joy and thankfulness, but a new evil is coming in viz., the tendency to Judaism. This, however, is not yet so far advanced in Corinth as it was in Galatia when *Galatians* was written. It is only beginning. It is a suggestive fact that *Romans*, written six or nine months later than 2 *Corinthians*, speaks of the Judaizing tendency as a danger in a stage similar to *Galatians*, and Dr. Drescher, in a most admirable article in *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, 1897, p. 1 ff., remarks that Paul, in writing to the Roman Church, with which he had never come into personal relations, and about whose position and difficulties he had only second-hand

¹ See Prof. W. Lock's convincing paper in *EXPOSITION*, July, 1897, p. 65.

information,¹ was guided greatly by the circumstances of the Corinthian congregation, in the midst of which he was writing.² Dr. Sanday and Mr. Headlam are, on the whole, of this opinion. Corinth, then, early in 56, was where Galatia stood in 53 (if I may assume the dates given in my *St. Paul*, merely to show the interval).

How, then, had Paul been ignorant of the steps in the Galatian defection? That was natural, on the South-Galatian view. The rapid and unforeseeable changes of his life after his second visit made it impossible for exchange of letters and messages to take place. Even after he went to Corinth he was still looking for the expected opening in Macedonia, which he understood to be his appointed field, until the new message was given him (*Acts xviii. 9*). But on the North-Galatian view, Paul was resident in Ephesus for a long time after leaving Galatia, and this residence was in accordance with his long-fixed intention (*Acts xviii. 21*). Those who place the composition of *Galatians* after *Romans* cannot explain Paul's ignorance, for it is as certain as anything can be that there was almost daily communication between Ephesus and Pisidian Antioch.³ The commoner view, which places *Galatians* as early as possible in the Ephesian residence, reduces the difficulty; but still leaves it unexplained why Paul's news was so sudden and so completely disastrous, why he had no preparation. Yet the tone of these opening words is inexplicable, unless the news had come like a thunderclap from a clear sky.

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(To be continued.)

¹ Reports from Aquila and Priscilla would not be sufficient, though they probably elicited the letter. *Acts xxviii.* shows that the Judaistic difficulty had not yet become serious in Rome.

² Similarly his Ephesian experiences influence, to some extent, the tone of 1 *Corinthians* and the early part of 2 *Corinthians*.

³ Not so frequent between Ancyra and Ephesus; but even in that case there was abundant communication.